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My Father

An Aberdeenshire Minister

1812-1891

W. Robertson Nicoll

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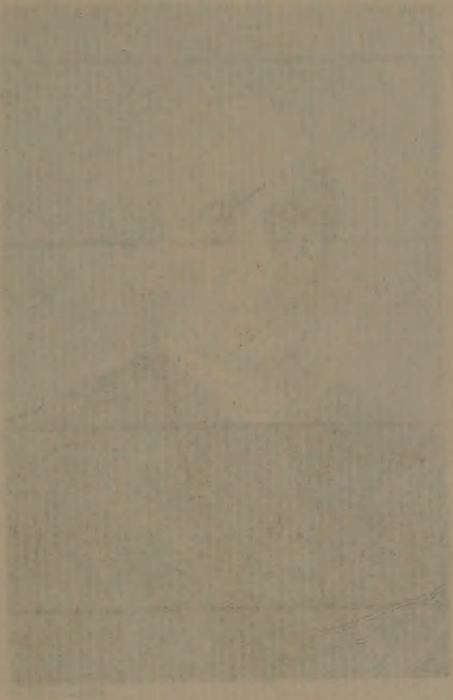
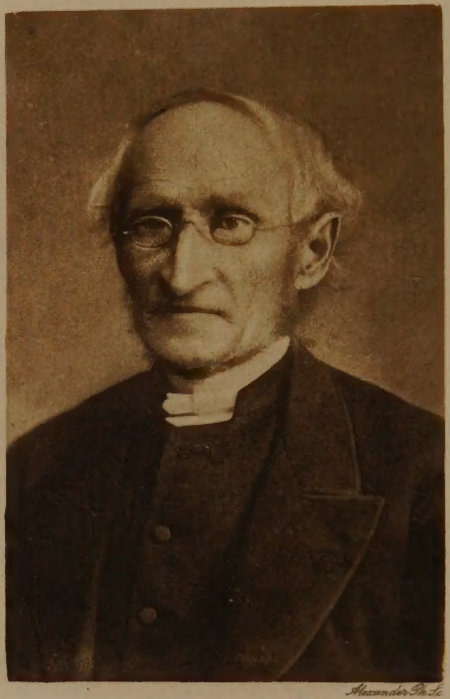
An Aberdeenshire Minister





Alexander Ph. Sc.

THE REV. HARRY NICOLL, M.A.

Minister of Auchindoir Free Church, 1843-1891.

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MY FATHER

An Aberdeenshire Minister

1812-1891

BY

W. ROBERTSON NICOLL

WITH TWO PHOTOGRAVURES

LONDON
HODDER AND STOUGHTON
1908

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY, K.G.

PREFACE

THE greater part of this little book was written under an impulse derived from Mr. Gosse's very remarkable record—*Father and Son.* In his brilliant and pathetic narrative Mr. Gosse describes the religious and literary training in a Puritan household of the strictest type. He lays stress on the manner in which his young life was cabined, cribbed, and confined, on the continual religious pressure brought to bear upon him, and on his father's refusal to face all the facts of science. During the same period I was brought up in a Scottish manse, and in an atmosphere of religious

belief almost as rigid and quite as faithful and sincere as that of Mr. Philip Gosse. But the methods my father adopted with his children were entirely different — so different that I have been moved to describe them.

It is with the greatest hesitation that I publish my story. My father all his life shrank from publicity, and he even expressed the desire that no tombstone should mark his grave. But I have thought, perhaps mistakenly, that it is an act of justice to set down the facts. Very little has yet been written about the obscurer ministers of the Disruption and their home life, and this is a humble contribution to the subject. I have in no way attempted a biography. My object has been to describe a character. That my father's character

was in some ways peculiar, I am well aware. He was truly earnest in his religious work; he laboured diligently in the spread of Christianity as he conceived it; he had very strong and decided opinions on many subjects, but apart from religion he was no propagandist and no controversialist. He was content to say his say, and beyond that he had no didactic instinct, nothing of the genuine magister. J. B. Mozley, in his article on Dr. Arnold, says: 'Some have no natural taste or liking for the particular office of influencing minds; their hearts and intellects expand within themselves, spread over the earth, air, and sea of speculation, and pervade all metaphysical nature before they definitely take up the notion of impressing their views upon any one being but themselves. The pleasure

of seeing their views received, seeing them take, and watching their entrance into other minds, is one which they do not feel or appreciate.' My father arrived at his conclusions in solitude and in travail: he held them very firmly, but to the last he was by choice rather a student than a teacher.

HAMPSTEAD, *March* 1908.

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MY FATHER

Somewhat narrow, somewhat slow,
Used to seem the ways, the walking: narrow ways are
well to tread
When there 's moss beneath the footsteps, honeysuckle
overhead.

INTRODUCTION

It was said long ago that in foreign countries every one knew where was the oracle at whose mouth he should inquire. In France or Germany nobody was at a loss to tell you where the most learned, the most enlightened men of the country were to be found. They were members of the Institute; they were lecturers in the College of Henri IV.; they were professors in the Universities. But in England it was far otherwise. Now and then a great light in theology or history would burst forth at Oxford or Cambridge, and draw all eyes to itself. But these were exceptions. 'Look over the roll of our literary heroes in ancient times or in present. Engaged in the distracting labours of the schoolroom,

serving the tables of a bank, in the back room of a public office, in the seclusion of a rustic parish are too often planted the men who in France or Germany would have been enthroned on professorial chairs, addressing themselves to the rising historians, philologers, or theologians of the age.' The writer goes on: 'If any foreigner landing in England last year asked where he should find the man best acquainted with all modern forms of thought here or on the Continent—where he should find the most complete collection of the philosophical, theological, or historical literature of Germany—where he should find profound and exact scholarship, combined with the most varied and extensive learning—what would have been the answer? Not in Oxford—not in Cambridge—not in London. He must have turned far away from academic towns or public libraries to a secluded parish in Sussex, and in the minister of that parish, in an archdeacon of one of the

least important of English dioceses, he would have found what he sought. He would have found such an one there: he would now find such an one no more. For such was Julius Hare, late rector of Hurstmonceaux and Archdeacon of Lewes.'

Without pretending for a moment to institute any comparison between Julius Hare and my father, I may yet say this: if one had been asked any time during the last thirty years of my father's life, which ended in 1891, where the best library and the best bookman in Scotland were to be found, I think if he had known the truth he would have referred the inquirer to my father's home. It was remote and secluded. You had to go to Aberdeen, take the train out for some thirty miles to Gartly, and then walk or drive another eight miles to Lumsden in the parish of Auchindoir. You would then find yourself in an upland village. At the side of that village you would find a little manse with

some 17,000 volumes gathered under its roof. You would be received with the utmost cordiality by the occupant, a Free Church minister, but you would not have been allowed to see more than a fraction of his books, unless you had spoken the sesame. If you had referred to Fynes Clinton or any other of his favourite authors, you would have been taken upstairs and introduced into the secret treasures of the house. If not, you would have left the place feeling you had been deceived.

I

CHRISTIAN AND BOOKMAN

My father, Harry Nicoll, was born in 1812 within a mile of the house in which he died, and between these two houses, with little change, his life of nearly eighty years was lived. How he came to be what he was remains a mystery. He was born in the parish at a time when religion of an earnest kind was very low—when the lamp of prophecy was almost extinguished. The son of a small farmer who died before middle life, he had hardly any opportunities of access to books in his youth. Yet somehow he became and continued a devout evangelical believer in a region where there were few to sympathise with him. He also

very early acquired a passion for books which never left him, which was as strong in his last year as it had been for any year of his appointed time. Habitually reticent about his own experience, my father never quite explained how these things came about. He did say, however, that the book which had influenced him far more than any other was Thomas Scott's little work called *The Force of Truth.* Thus he was linked to Newman, whom he came to admire so much. However this may be, his evangelicalism led him to surrender his position at the Disruption, and it held him fast through all his varied experiences of literature and of life. As to his books—I cannot tell how he first formed the passion of the collector and the reader. But he formed it very early, and he gratified it, certainly not to the full, but in an almost miraculous way when his narrow circumstances are considered. His income at the best was never quite £200, and often it was much nearer

£100. Notwithstanding, the books were gathered to the number I have mentioned, year by year. Every week some were bought and added. This he managed mainly through his extraordinarily ascetic habits. He was practically a vegetarian and a teetotaler. Teetotalism, indeed, he used to repudiate vehemently, having a strong objection to the use of unfermented wine, or, rather, to the theory which lay behind that use. But he was like the American theologian who drank one glass of wine every year in order to assert his Christian rights. I doubt very much whether my father drank as much as one glass of wine a year in the course of his life, though to hear him talk against unfermented wine, the uninstructed might suppose him to be a Bacchanalian. He had no personal extravagances of any kind, and as he did not marry till he was in mid-life, every farthing that could be spared till then went to the purchase of books.

He bought few new books, because he could not afford them. Nearly all were bought second-hand, and second-hand books in those days were cheap. He purchased all the series of cheap reprints issued in the period. We had Chambers's books, the Religious Tract Society's green series at sixpence, Charles Knight's weekly volumes, and, above all, the excellent libraries of Bohn in their completeness.

II

COLLEGE DAYS

After my father's death I came upon some letters he addressed to his brothers during his college years. They throw a strong light on the extreme hardships of Aberdeen students at the time, *circa* 1830. They are also an impressive testimony to the passion for learning which then existed in the north. My father never complained of his hardships at college, and indeed never referred to them. But from these letters I find that he had a bursary of about £12 a year, of which £8 had to be paid in fees. This left £4 for a session of twenty weeks. The young student rented a garret for a shilling a week, furnished it

somehow, and for the rest subsisted mainly upon provisions sent in from the country by his brothers. As he had to pay for books and for clothes he was reduced to almost desperate poverty, and was unable for long periods in the cold winters to have any fire at all. He writes to his brothers: 'The coals I got last have lasted well, as it is nearly six weeks since I got them, and they are not yet done. I have been more in proportion for coals than for peats, especially at the beginning, as I was so ignorant how to use coals. I then required about two pennyworth weekly, but a pennyworth is now sufficient, and if the weather continues as it has been for some days past, I intend to use very little fire. I will kindle my fire but once or twice in the week for boiling my eggs.' In another letter, evidently in response to affectionate inquiries, he says: 'With regard to my being without fire, sometimes, it is a matter of no importance, as when the weather is

warm I can do well enough without it, and when it is cold I always kindle it. I have not bought either milk or ale since I came in. I take treacle-and-water instead of them. I did not like it well for some time, but I like it well now, and take it once or twice daily. I could not do without something of that kind, bread and cheese making me so thirsty.' In another letter he explains that his stock of money was reduced to twopence. It would appear, then, that he contrived to exist for five months of the Aberdeen winter for about £4. Of this a guinea went in lodgings, the rest in clothes and books, and an occasional pennyworth of coal, and a rare supplement to the bread and cheese and treacle-and-water on which he had to live. But in spite of all this he pursued his studies to good purpose, gaining various honours. None of the professors of the period seems to have made a great impression on Mr. Nicoll. He received much

kindness from the Professor of Mathematics, Mr. Tulloch, and was a favourite pupil of Dr. Patrick Forbes, who taught Latin and Chemistry! But for the University my father had the deepest veneration. He never lost the thrill with which he viewed the crown of King's College from the railway as you approach Aberdeen. Of these professors of the olden time it must be said, that whatever they were, they could teach. The students perhaps carried as much knowledge from the University in those days as they do in these.

III

THE DISRUPTION

When Mr. Nicoll had completed his course and graduated as Master of Arts, he was appointed schoolmaster of his native parish, Auchindoir. The salary was small, but there were various perquisites, and the position was a comfortable one. The trustees of the Dick bequest, left for the benefit of northern education, insisted on examining all newly appointed teachers before allowing them to participate in the bequest, and Mr. Nicoll was successful in passing, with the result that his income was considerably increased. But he did not intend to remain a schoolmaster. His

heart was set on the ministry, and he pursued his theological studies until he obtained licence to preach. During those years the dispute as to the power of the Church, which ended in the Disruption of 1843, was raging. My father took the Free Church side, and accordingly lost his position as schoolmaster. I have no intention of dwelling on this often-told story. A note in my father's diary in 1840 shows how his mind was drifting. Among the books read was *Glasgow Lectures on Establishments*, etc. 'These are able and well-written lectures. Still, it appears to me doubtful whether Christianity authorises any man or any body of men to compel me to contribute to its support.'

Another note in 1843 after the Disruption has taken place is also significant:—

'This month has been passed in considerable anxiety regarding the state of the Church and my own future prospects. I have been delighted at the firm and dis-

interested spirit shown by the ministers of the Free Church, and the secession has been nearly twice as large as I supposed it would be at first. I daily expected after the Disruption to be appointed to preach in Lumsden village [the village of his parish], but the month passed away and no appointment came. Feared I would be directed to continue teaching till the law regarding schools should be determined. Would be most unwilling to agree to this. Cannot think I have any legal right to hold a school after leaving the Establishment, and have little pleasure in remaining here in such circumstances. Comforted by the words, "Cast your care upon Him, for He careth for you."'

To this I may add that my father frequently said that the secession was both more numerous and more generous than was expected at the time by those who went out. The ordinary ministers around him calculated on an income of £40. As

my father had about £120, this was a serious sacrifice, but he believed that he could live on £40. There was obviously a great spiritual exhilaration at the time, and it lasted for long. I have often heard the ministers who came out repudiating the word sacrifice in connection with their abandonment of State aid and privilege. In the presbytery of Alford, to which my father belonged, no minister came out and no schoolmaster except himself. Feeling ran very high in those days, but my father continued on very friendly terms with some ministers who remained in the Establishment, and he used frequently to say that the view which identified the Establishment men with Moderates and the Free Church men with Evangelicals was by no means strictly true to the facts. But there can be no doubt that the Disruption experience gave a special courage and buoyancy to those who went through it. It was like a new tide

welling up at the innermost spring of the heart.

Mr. Nicoll became the first Free Church minister of Auchindoir, and continued in that position till he died in 1891. Some years before his death he had a colleague, with whom he lived on the happiest terms, and after that he did little ministerial work. It will be observed that all the honour he ever received was from his own people. He dwelt among them all his life, and was schoolmaster and minister in their midst for two generations. He loved them and the parish. During his ministry he was not absent a week a year on an average from his own home. He knew every house, every individual—it might almost be said every tree, every flower, every stone of the 'primitive, russet, remote country' in which he lived and died.

IV

HIS MARRIAGE

My father married in 1851 Miss Jane Robertson, niece and adopted daughter of the Rev. William Robertson, Free Church minister of Aboyne. My grand-uncle, who was a very pugnacious though genial controversialist, belonged to the clan Struan, and maintained with great determination his claim to be head of the clan, but the decision went against him. My mother was a bright, warm-hearted, eager girl, exceedingly well educated for her time. Though she was sixteen years younger than her husband, the marriage was one of perfect union. It

was clouded early by her falling into consumption. This seemed even to strengthen the tie between husband and wife. From the first she was associated with my father in his studies. His wedding gift to her was an Italian edition of Ariosto, and they read together regularly till her health broke down. After that my father was in the habit of reading to her for hours every day. In spite of all that could be done my mother grew steadily weaker, and died eight years after her marriage, leaving four children, three of whom have now followed her. I remember that on the night of her death my father announced the heavy tidings to the frightened little children huddled together in the kitchen. He told them with a smile, and we wondered why he smiled. Her death made a great difference to him, but he seldom spoke of her directly, only whenever anything fortunate happened he was sure to say, even to the very last, 'I wish

your mother had been here.' And so we saw that the words

'If She were yet Alive'

were the underthought of all his thinking. During her lifetime his purchases in books were necessarily limited, but after she was gone he seemed to comfort himself by an increased devotion to study and reading.

V

HIS THEORY OF LIFE

My father was not apt to formulate theories. He acted unconsciously to a very large extent, but one postulate he laid down often and lived up to. He thought that life was not worth living unless a man had plenty of time to cultivate his intellectual tastes. To his own ministry he was very faithful, but he had only about a hundred people, and in these days the activities of modern Church life were unknown. He was, I say, busy in his vocation, and walked and rode many miles in order to foster and encourage new congregations. In the affairs of his flock he was deeply interested. For long he was the lawyer and the doctor

of the parish. Nobody ever applied to him in vain for any help he could render. He prepared his discourses elaborately, and was in every way a loyal son of his Church. Still, when all was done, he had very much leisure. There was not much company in the place; he was seldom an evening out; he had very few visitors; there were no distractions, and for many years he was able to apply most of his time to the constant study of books.

He judged his lot ideal, and all he asked from Providence was that things should not grow worse. Though he had few possessions, everything was prized to the full. When he compared his allotment with that of others, he compassionated the others. He had no envy and no jealousy of men in more prominent positions. Rather he was sorry for them because they could not possibly have time enough for reading. He coveted nothing for his children but that they should enjoy a life like his, and

deeply regretted their removal to more obtrusive activities. His little manse, I see, he noted in his diary when he entered it as 'a most comfortable and commodious residence. Thanks be to God.' And this was the constant temper of his mind. But, like the rest of us, he had his share of sorrows and trials. Bereavement had a slow, wasting effect upon him which was very distressing. The last great blow that fell on him was the death of my brother, Henry J. Nicoll, whose books, *Landmarks in English Literature* and *Great Movements and Those who achieved Them*, are still read and valued. From this loss he seemed hardly to recover. He could not bear the removal of his family and his people to other places. He kept fearing that he might be left alone at last. His one desire from Providence was that things should not change, and his conception of Heaven, frequently expressed, was that it should be very like this world, only without the

changes. My father was not in the slightest degree self-conscious, and therefore he was never shy. He liked people, but he did not much discriminate between them. Whether it was peer or peasant who visited him, each was received with the same frank simplicity. This was based upon no theory of any kind, though I dare say he could have found a theory if his action had been challenged. He was pleased to hear about popular preachers, but was not really interested in them, and on the occasions when he heard them did not care for them. I remember taking him to Spurgeon's Tabernacle, and though he liked and admired Spurgeon very much, all he had to say of the sermon was, 'most commonplace.' But there was one class of men for whom he really cared, and whom he treated with profound respect. These were scholars. Secluded as his life was, it was impossible that so remarkable a man should be altogether ignored. His most intimate friend

was Mrs. Piazzi Smith, the wife of the Astronomer-Royal for Scotland, whom he had taught Greek in early days, and with her and her husband he maintained close relations. When Dr. George Smeaton, the most learned of the early Free Churchmen, was a professor at Aberdeen, he found out my father, and there was between them the most endeared association. Smeaton's patristic attainments especially commanded my father's respect, and his manner to Smeaton was unconsciously quite different from his manner to the rest. He listened carefully to what he said, put many questions, and noted down the replies. Another highly valued friend was Alfred Edersheim, who was for a time minister of the Free Church at Old Aberdeen. Edersheim went into the Church of England, and became famous as a writer. But his closest friends were his co-presbyters, of whom I shall write presently. For Robertson Smith, whom he knew from childhood, he had a

great affection, and it was returned. It was a good experience to hear the two discussing together theological books. There were others in different fields, like Professor Heddle of St. Andrews, whom we saw more or less. The scholar was my father's hero, and when he had a scholar in his company he unconsciously behaved as one who had to make the very best of an opportunity that would soon pass, and learn as much as possible. The other successes and dignities of life hardly entered into his mind, and did not enter at all into his manner.

My father, so far as I could ever see, had no literary ambition whatever except the ambition to know. This marks him sharply off from almost every other human being I have encountered. He had no desire, not even a passing wish, to change his sphere of labour. He disliked the life of cities and towns, and he was totally unfitted for the care of a great congregation. This is not so wonderful. What is more wonderful

is that he did not even wish to write. His friend Dr. William Alexander, of the *Aberdeen Free Press*, used to send him books to review. My father was pleased to get the books for nothing, but he generally took six months to write a review, and it is not surprising that the engagement came to an end. What is still stranger, he had little desire to communicate his knowledge in conversation. I have often seen him sit silent where a theme was being discussed which he knew to the roots. Here again he had no theory, but I fancy what was at the back of his mind was that discussion was useless unless it was conducted on something like a basis of equality. He intensely disliked strife or controversy. On the other hand, no one was more ready to give information when information was asked. It was a revelation to me to ask him a question. 'Do you know anything written on such and such a subject?' 'I

think I do,' was the invariable answer, and within an hour he would bring down a pile of books with pieces of paper indicating where the information was to be found. In this command of his knowledge I have never known any one who equalled him.

This love of knowledge gave his life a continual zest and freshness to the very end. He suffered for years from cataract, which disabled and wearied him very much, though he bore the affliction with a strange patience. But as long as he had the command of his eyes all was well. Every day opened for him as a day of hope. He was going to satisfy his curiosity, and the hours were too few. He did not know what it was to be bored except when he was cut off from his books. The concerns of his daily life, his active out-of-doors employment in gardening and carpentering, and the continual interrogation of his beloved books made life an unfailing joy even to the last.

VI

HIS LIBRARY

My father possessed a library, as distinct from a mere collection of books. That is, he aimed at accumulating the standard works in English literature in every branch of it. He had the theologians, the philosophers, the biographers, the historians, the novelists, the poets, and to a certain extent the scientific writers. There was perhaps no really standard author who was not represented among his books. I have known a few who may have had even a larger gathering of volumes, but no one whose library was so symmetrical and so complete. I propose to give some account of its principal constituents.

As the great interest of his life was theology, it was natural that his theological collection should be exceptionally full and rich. He aimed at having the complete works of the most eminent teachers. Thus he would have Wesley in many volumes side by side with William Law; Waterland along with Chalmers; and Arminius with Calvin. The systematic theologians of the Reformation were particularly well represented. But others had an honoured place. Thus he had accumulated with great difficulty the whole works of Thomas Fuller. Turretin was an especial favourite, but his two chosen theological books were Pearson on the Creed and Butler's *Analogy*. Of these he possessed almost every good edition. I forget how many editions he had of Pearson—certainly the first seven, at any rate; of Butler he had practically every edition, and I can imagine how he would have whistled if he had been told that Mr. Gladstone, when beginning his

edition of Butler for the Clarendon Press, was actually ignorant of Bishop Fitzgerald's edition. Of contemporary theologians he valued most Principal Cunningham, Charles Hodge, and Patrick Fairbairn. Cunningham, who was a very able and ruthless polemic, possessed his fullest confidence and admiration. Next to him came Hodge, surely the most luminous of all theological writers. Next came Patrick Fairbairn, who did a great work in his day, though now unjustly forgotten. But he could admire some who were of a different school. For sermons he cared little, but for Robertson of Brighton's discourses he had an almost unbounded admiration. His copies are all marked over. Robertson's views on many points were different from his own, but he would say, 'You read Robertson, and you find constantly things you could never have thought of, but recognise to be true.' He would always say that Robertson was the most striking and original of preachers.

He had also a special favour for Newman —his sermons, his *Apologia*, and his essays. Once, when he was not able to read after an operation for cataract, he asked for a sermon. First we tried one of Dr. Raleigh's fine discourses, but he impatiently interrupted. He showed no greater satisfaction when Stopford Brooke was begun. At last another writer was found, and he listened to the end in appreciative silence. 'That,' he said, 'is very striking. Who wrote that?' When told that it was Newman, he remarked, 'I might have known it.' *Ecce Homo*, on the other hand, was by no means to his mind, and he would hardly admit any merit or any truth in it. It was almost the only theological book which he intensely disliked, and I never was quite able to understand his position. For the mystics he had a great favour. He read Upham's *Madame Guyon* to his young wife when she was dying, and she liked nothing so well. He had made a fair collection of

mystics, including some rare books of Jacob Boehme, and often turned them over.

But perhaps his strongest interest was in Church history. In this he was very deeply read. There was hardly an obscure sect down to the Buchanites about which he did not know. His view of the Church's future was in a sense tinged with pessimism. He thought that the course of the Church was through alternate periods of darkness and brightness. He would quote frequently such passages as 'The whole world lieth in wickedness,' and 'When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith in the earth?' He would have agreed with Charles Hodge's argument that the promise, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' might be fulfilled if only two Christians were alive at the Second Advent—if the mustard-tree of the Kingdom had shrunk into an herb of mint or anise. In this partial pessimism he resembled Robertson Smith, who

thought that if the unbelief represented by Huxley should become dominant, it would persecute. If I mistake not, Robertson Smith has said something like this in print; he frequently said it in talk. But, on the whole, my father had faith in the future. 'The earth spins round from dark to light, and from light to dark.' He had seen great things happen, and he knew that they might happen again. In the Greek Church, the Roman, and the Anglican, he was deeply interested. Thus he anticipated with such eagerness the publication of Dr. Pusey's *Eirenicon* that he actually ordered it in advance of publication, though it was an expensive book.

Next to theology came the Greek and Latin classics. My father firmly believed that no one was educated who was not a classical scholar—that there could be no sound education except on the basis of Greek and Latin. One little room was devoted entirely to Greek and Latin books

and translations from them. Like others of his time, my father was a good Latin scholar, but he learned little Greek at the University, and had to carry on the study himself. Of all the classical writers, Horace was his favourite. In the thirties he translated most of the Odes, and published the translations in the Aberdeen newspapers. I possess some of them still, and they seem to me well turned and musical. He was never out of the Greek Testament, and possessed at his death about a hundred different editions. My father was too poor to buy rare books, though he would have done it if he had been able. Still, he managed to get a few together. He had the Elzevir Cæsar—the right one—a lovely Cicero in vellum, a magnificent folio containing George Buchanan's works bound in vellum, stamped with gold, hardly tarnished by the years. Like other collectors of sound mind, he loved to say, 'I smell russia,' and he possessed quite a number of

the beautifully printed Baskerville books bound in russia. On these he ever turned a complacent eye. There was scarcely a day in his life that he was not reading a page or two out of some Greek or Latin classic. The somewhat rigid theology of his school was tempered in many cases by this humanism. Thus I remember Horatius Bonar and his brother Andrew were good classical scholars, and never quite let the classics go out of their reading. In his essay on Leopardi, Mr. Gladstone touches on the difficulty of reconciling a strict theology with the study of the classics, and points out characteristically that it takes a great deal of good theology to counteract and profit by the reading of the classics.

In *belles-lettres* my father had his preferences, though his main tastes did not lie that way. History he loved: biography he loved even better; but for fiction he did not care, and he read it only as a duty. He thought that no properly educated man

Alexander Watt.

The Free Church Manse, Auchindoir, Lumsden. Built in 1850.

could afford to neglect the best fiction, and so he went through the masterpieces of Scott, Bulwer Lytton, Disraeli, and many others. Bulwer Lytton was his favourite, but this was perhaps due to the fact that there is a good deal of history in Bulwer Lytton's novels. He had also a somewhat unaccountable liking for Disraeli's novels. Charlotte Brontë he admired ardently, but more for the fortitude of her life than for her books. Mrs. Gaskell's biography of Miss Brontë was a chief favourite with every one of us, and I cannot tell how often it was read. Of Dickens my father knew little, and of Thackeray nothing but *The Virginians*. Thackeray's works for long continued to be expensive. My father conceived at last that it was his duty to read one, and sent for a specimen to a circulating library in Aberdeen. He detested circulating libraries, and rarely used them. We got the work in three volumes, and as sixpence had to be paid for the use

of each volume, it was considered right that we should both read it through. How well I remember the reading! It is one of the most vivid of my early recollections. We read it in a very stormy winter. My father sat on one side of the little table and I on the other, with the naphtha lamp between us, each diligently scanning the page, while outside the strath lay locked in snow, and the winds were piling up the drift. At nine precisely each night we separated and went to bed, and hardly ever without a smile or a laugh. Truly we found *The Virginians* a most tedious book. I have never looked at it since, but it so prejudiced my father against Thackeray that he never could be induced to attempt another novel of the master. He would say, 'I have read *The Virginians*, but—oh me!'

My father was a connoisseur in style, and used to talk much on the subject. He disliked high-flown writing such as that of Christopher North, and peculiarly objected

to what are called eloquent sermons. Even Dr. Chalmers did not escape his criticism. He thought that Truth did not speak rhetorically except when she was sore stung indeed, or, like Brutus, had to veil her utterances under a seeming madness. What he asked for in a writer was clearness, limpidity, short sentences. His favourite stylists were Hazlitt and Newman. At a time when very few in Scotland can have known Hazlitt, my father had diligently accumulated his books. He prided himself on a magnificently bound copy of Hazlitt's *Select Poets*. Newman's *Apologia* he thought a model of style, but not quite equal in that respect to some of the best of the sermons.

In poetry his supreme book was Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, which he knew pretty well by heart—especially LI. with the lines—

> 'I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
> Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
> There must be wisdom with great Death:
> The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.'

VII

A YEAR'S BOOK-BUYING

It is worth while, I think, to give a specimen list of books purchased in a year by him, and also a specimen of his journal of studies. I print them exactly as they are written, and I have chosen the specimen at random. This is the list of books bought in 1862, with the names of the booksellers from whom they were purchased. These were mostly Aberdeen booksellers, though some books were bought from London catalogues.

BOOKS—1862

JANUARY

Consolation, by Dr. Alexander.
Geddes' Gr. Grammar.

A Year's Book-Buying

Campbell's Lecture on Infidel Literature, with 3 pamphlets in reply.
Edinr. Conf. on Missions.
Melvin's Lat. Grammar.
Mair's Introduction.

(*G. Clark & Son.*)

Besser's Xt. the Light, etc.
Bulwer's Harold.
White's Rome.
M'Cheyne's Memoirs, etc.

(*R. Walker.*)

Chalmers' Readings. 2 vols.
Angus' Handbook of Eng. Lang.
Miall's British Churches.
—— Bases of Belief.
Eadie's Life of Kitto.
Gold from Xtn. Treasury.
Heine's Poems (Bohn).
Xtn. Almk.—Bushnell on Supernat.
Chambers' Cyc. Vol. iii.

(*King.*)

An Aberdeenshire Minister

Riddle's Eccl. Chronology.
(*Wagrell.*)

Livy. 7 vols. Beza, N. T.
Smyth's Evidences.
(*A. Smith.*)

FEBRUARY

Riddle's Eccl. Antiqs.
Faber's Diff. of Romanism.
Bp. Trevern's Answer.
Husenbeth's Ans. to Supplement.
—— Faberism Exposed.
(*Wagrell.*)

Dunbar's Gr. Lexicon.
Scott's Sermons. 8vo. (completing his works).
Kaye's Clement of Alexandria (completing his works on Fathers).
Claude's Defence. 2 vols.
Life of Walton. 2 vols.
Fry on Romans.

A Year's Book-Buying

Feltham's Resolves by Cumming.
Mordecai's Apol. 2 vols. (2nd ed.)
Wilson's Evidences. 2 vols in 1.
Irving's Hum. Nature of Xt.
(*Adam.*)

Chalmers' Readings. 2 vols. (completing work).
Bohn's ed. of *Carrell*, etc.
—— Lowndes, pt. 7.
Collier's Eng. Literature.
Birks' Bible and Mod. Thought.
Krummacher—Suffering Saviour.
Tholuck's Light from Cross.
Puritan Divines—Adam. Vol. ii.
(*King.*)

Whitgift. 3 vols. (Parker Socy.)
Orig. Letters. 2 vols. (completing Letters). (Parker Socy.)
Latimer Sermons. Vol. i. (compl. Sermons).
Mordecai's Apol. 1st ed. 4to.

Niebuhr. 2 vols.
(*G. Clark & Son.*)

Strauss' Life of Xt. 2 vols.
(*J. Walker.*)

MARCH

Apoc. of O. and N. Test.
(*Reeves & Turner.*)

Crevier's Rom. Empers. 10 vols.
Hey's Lectures. 4 vols.
Rose's Parkhurst's Gr. Lex.
Chevalier's Plain of Troy.

Howson & Conybeare's Life and Eps. of Paul. 2 vols.
Abdn. Almanack. (*J. Smith.*)

Burns' Hist. of Church.
Page's Rud. Text B. of Geology. 5 ed.
(*G. Clark & Son.*)

Tittmann's John. 2 vols.
Secess. Witness.
(*Brown & Co.*)

Nares on Imp. Version.
Laurence do. (*Baker.*)

APRIL

Klopstock, by Collyer and Meeke.
Supplement to Faber's Diff. of Romanism. (*Edwards.*)

Rollin's Belles Lettres. 3 vols.
Vaughan's Wycliffe. 2 vols. in one.
Moncreiff's Life of Erskine.
Burton's Sermons.
Jones' Lexicon.
Adam's Grammar.
Schrevelius's Lx.
Dymock's Dictionary.
Dymock's Cæsar. (*Adam.*)

An Aberdeenshire Minister

Michaelis' Introd. 6 vols.
Harmer's Observations. 4 vols.
Scott's Life. 8vo.
Stuart on Apocalypse. 1 vol. 8vo.
Bellamy's True Religion.

(*Brown & Co.*)

Burton's Pearson on Creed. 2 vols.

(*A. Smith.*)

Newcome's N. Test. 2 vols.
Replies to Essays and Reviews. Ed. by Bp. of Oxford.

(*J. Smith.*)

Michaelis' Laws of Moses. 4 vols.
Schaff's Apost. Histr.
Memorials of Dr. Love. 2 vols.
Dodd's Prison Thoughts.
Lamp of Love.

(*A. & R. Milne.*)

Aids to Faith.
Cunningham's Reviews.

A Year's Book-Buying

Osburn's Errors of the Fathers.
Adam's Sermons. Vol. 3.
(*King.*)

Besser's Christ the Life of World.
(*Davidson.*)

Bonar's Hymns of Faith and Hope.
(*R. Walker.*)

Divine Footsteps in H. Histy.
(*from Author.*)

M. Good, Life of Geddes.
Burton's Chrony. of Acts, etc.
(*Baker.*)

Neander's Ch. Hist. Vols. 8, 9.
(*T. & T. Clark.*)

Riddle's Xtn. Antiqs.
Geddes' Prospectus.
Fawcett's Sermons. 2 vols.

Imp. Version. 4 ed.
Bevans on do. (*J. Smith.*)

MAY

Conard's Early Christians.
Hey's Lectures. 2d. ed. 4 vols.
(*Davidson.*)

Price's Sermons.
(*Reeves & Turner.*)

London Lects. to Y. Men, 1861-62.
Macaulay's Biographies.
London—Chambers. (*King.*)

Taciti Op. Delph. 9 vols.
(*Davidson.*)

JUNE

Wardlaw on James.
Sibbes' Works. Vol. i. (Pur. Div.)
(*King.*)

Calvin's Insts., by Featherstone.

(*Baker.*)

Tacitus. 5 vols.
Cassell's London Guide.
Arnold's Latin Composition. Pt. i.
Melvin's Latin Exercises. 2 vols.

(*J. Smith.*)

Rooke's Arrian.

(*Reeves & Turner.*)

Allix, Judgment of Church.
Faber's Romanism. 2d. ed.
M'Ilvaine on Oxford Divinity.
Leighton on Peter, by Bradley.
Erskine, T., on Faith. 3d. ed.
Hawes' Transl. of N. T.
Brown's Letters on Sanctification.
Cassell's Euclid.

(*A. & R. Milne.*)

Scott's Bible. 6 vols.
Rollin. 12 vols.

(*A. Smith.*)

Riddle's Xtn. Antiqs. (for Mr. Mackay).

(*R. Walker.*)

JULY

Ridgeley's Divinity. 2 vols. fol.
Synod of Dort. 2 vols. 4to.
Arminius' Works. 3 vols.
Gr. Test. Alexand. MS.
Gr. Test. Scrivener.
Hill's Ancient Greeks.
Barnes on Atonement.

(*Ogle & Murray.*)

Heyne's Virgil. 4 vols.
Fleming's Phil. of Zoology. 2 vols.
Racov. Catechism.
Nichol's Calv. and Arminianism.
Virgil (Nelson).

Child of Kingdom.
Bradford's Works. Parker Socy. 2 vols.

Howe's Works. Tr. Socy. 2 vols.
(*King.*)

Adam's Grammar.
Boyle's Examination.
Geog. of Britain.
Davenant on Justification, etc. 2 vols.
Echard's Hist. of England. 2 vols.
Essays and Reviews. 8vo.
Fox's N. Test. 2 vols.
Hetherington's Rome.
Sumner on Luke.
Sacred Oratory.
Tappan on the Will.
Usserii Annales.
Wardlaw on the Heathen.
Malkin's Greece, etc.
Child of Kingdom (for Mrs. C.).

An Aberdeenshire Minister

Finney's Skeletons.
Roman Republic (Encyc. Metrop.).
—— Empire do.
Sedgwick's Studies.
Skene's Chrony. Biogy. of Cowper.
Roberts on Matt. Gospel.
Bengelii Gnomon.
Parkhurst's Lexicon.
Census Tables. Davidson's Recollections.

(*A. & R. Milne.*)

AUGUST

Scott's Letters and Papers.

(*Reeves & Turner.*)

Warner on Job. (*King.*)
Baxter on New Test. (*Baker.*)

Buchanan's Cl. Furlough.
Irving's Last Days.

(*A. & R. Milne.*)

A Year's Book-Buying

Kerr's Bruce. 2 vols.
Linnæus' System, by Turton. 6 vols.
Mormons. Illust. Liby.
Reed's 'No Fiction.'—Cobbet's Ref. in Engd.
Tait's Magdalenism.
Smith's Thucydides. *Jones.*
Hetherington's Fulness of Times.
Hill's Latin Synonemes.
Ward's Ideal of Church.
Hales on Trinity.
Hailes' Xtn. Remains.
Ruins of Classic, etc., Lands.
Leighton on Creed.
Last Supper. Wright.
Johnston's Psalm, etc.
Fleming's Zoology. 2 vols.
Ruins of Ancient Cities.
Adam's Lat. Dictionary.
Russell's Mod. Europe. 7 vols.
Palmer on Development.
Lady's Voyage—Illust. Liby.
Torrie's Lat. Preceptor.

An Aberdeenshire Minister

Buchanan's Life. 2 vols.
Life of Wesley.
Carey's Book of Job.
Moehler's Life of Anselm.
Lorimer's Tracts on Infidelity.
Cranmer's Life.
Campbell on Miracles.
Farindon's Sermons. 4 vols.
Beecher's Views in Theology.
Carpenter on Magic, etc.
Racovian Catechism.
Wardlaw's Unitarianism.
Cumberland's Origines.
Trials of Charles I. and Regicides.
Michell's Ruins of Many Lands.

(*G. Clark & Son.*)

Life of K. White in Xtn. Biogy.
Life of Wesley in do.
Strauss's Sinai, etc.
Chepmell's History. 1st Course.
Calvin's Institutes.
Scotch Preacher. 4 vols.

Power in Pulpit.
Wagner's Virgil.
Census of Scotland.
(*A. & R. Milne.*)

SEPTEMBER

Balfour's Botany. Pt. I.
Virgil's Bucolics, etc. Anthon.
(*Milne.*)

Burnet on Church Government.
Life of Sir James Melville.
Cattermole's Great Civil War.
Arriani Exped. Alexandri.
Hale's Contemplations. 2 vols.
Butler on Latin Propositions.
Machiavelli on Livy, etc.
Stenhouse's Tracts.
Test. Gr. and Lat. 2 vols.
Clarke on Trinity.
Kip's Holidays at Rome.
Stafford Hist. of Music.
(*A. Smith.*)

Hooke's Rom. Histy. 6 vols.
Fox's N. Test. 2 vols.
Revols. of Rome. 2 vols.
Klopstock and his Friends.
Jebb's Life and Letters, by Forster.
(*J. Smith.*)

Gr. Test. Vat. MS. *Leipsic.*
Gr. Test. Vat. MS. Notes. *Dublin.*
Gray on Parables.
(*Reeves & Turner.*)

OCTOBER

Gr. Test. Vat. MS. 2d. *Rom.* ed.
Gr. Test. Vat. MS. Leyden.
Beauties of Shakespere. Dodd.
(*Milne.*)

Watson on Southey's Life of Wesley.
(*Baker.*)

Bentley on Phalaris.
Cuvier's Theory of Earth.
(*Reeves & Turner.*)

A Year's Book-Buying

Stanford's Life of Rhodes.
Stuart on Canticles. 2nd. ed.
Sibbes' Works. Vol. iii.

(*King.*)

Memoir of Is. Campbell. *Story.*
Memoir of L. Carpenter, by his Son.

(*J. Smith.*)

Memoir and Remains of Miss Smith.
2 vols.
Smith's (J. P.) Letters to Belsham.
Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism.
Forbes' (of Culloden's) Works.
Heidelberg Catechism.
Witsius on Prayer. Bibl. Cabinet.
Krummacher's Cornelius. Do.
How's Meditations.
Jebb's Life and Letters, by Forster.
Foster's Introd. to Doddridge.

Mormons, by Mackay.
Dante.

An Aberdeenshire Minister

Virgil, Dymock.

Shelley's Poems.
Wilson on Transl. of Homer.

(*J. Adam.*)

Lucas on Happiness.
Leighton's Sermons. (*Courage.*)

Teatro Italiano. Vol. 3.
Young on Hieroglyphics.
Dana's Mineralogy.
Withering's Botany.
Croly's Sermons.
Luther on Psalms.
Noel on Ch. and State.
Chalmers on Establishments.
—— Ch. Extension.

Beith on John. 2 vols.
Chalmers' Introd. Essays.

(*R. Walker.*)

Brit. Eloquence. Lity. Addresses. 3d. Series.

—— ——. Sacred Oratory. 1 Series.

Palace of Great King.

Fletcher's Works. 2 vols.

M. Grant's 'Abounding in the Work, etc.' (*King.*)

Feltham's Resolves. folio.

Crevier's Livy. 6 vols.

Dacier's Horace. 8 vols.

Blackwell's Court of Augustus. 3 vols.

H. More's Works. 2 vols.

Homilies. (*A. Smith.*)

Shelley's Letters and Papers. 2 vols. (*Milne.*)

NOVEMBER

Diodorus Siculus. 2 vols. folio.

Livy. 4 vols. Ernesti.

An Aberdeenshire Minister

Dammii Lex. Homericum. 2 vols.
Pauli's Key to Analecta Heb.
Breviarium Romanum.
Kidd on Trinity.
Gray's Connection. 2 vols.
Cumberland's Phœn. History.
Müller's Gr. Liter. 2 vols.
Montgomery's Pelican Island, etc.
Chalmers on Establishments.
Klopstock. 2 vols.
Lorimer's Pat. Hamilton.
Memoir of Horner. 2 vols.
Wolfe's Remains.
Bloomfield's G. Test. 2 vols.

(*J. Adam.*)

'Recreations of a Country Parson.'
Labouring and Praying.
Parish Papers. M'Leod.
Chambers' Cycl. Vol. 4.
Xtn. Almanack.
Modern Atheism and the Bible.

(*King.*)

Creech's Lucretius. Transl. 2 vols.
(*Reeves & Turner.*)

Creech's Lucretius—Latin.
(*A. Smith.*)

Wright's Manual of Conduct.
(*Baker.*)

Griesbach's N. T. Ed. '96-1806.
(*J. Smith.*)

Cunningham's Histor. Theology. 2 vols.
Howe's Works. Vol. 3.
Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson.
(*King.*)

DECEMBER

King on Orig. of Evil, etc. 4th ed.
(*Baker.*)

Goodwin's Works. Vol. 4.

An Aberdeenshire Minister

(Alexander's Xtn. Thought and Work —returned). (*King.*)

Livy. Chambers. (*Adam.*)

Laurence on Griesbach's Classifn., etc. (*Lumley.*)

Blanc's Theses.
Mertii, 'Demonstratio.'
Montgomery's Wanders., etc. (*A. Smith.*)

Livy, I.-V.

518 and 12 pamphlets.

VIII

A YEAR'S STUDIES

I GIVE next his journal of studies. It ought to be said that whenever he read an important book he was in the habit of referring to other books in his possession on the same subject, so that his actual reading was much greater than appears in the list.

JOURNAL OF STUDIES—1863

JANUARY

Cunningham's Reformers, etc.
Guthrie's 'Speaking to the Heart.'
Watson on Univ. Redemption.
Whately on Writings of St. Paul.
Eothen.
Cunningham's Inaug. Lecture.

Cunningham's Address, etc., 1 Apr. 1857.

" "

Read a good deal on *Calvin* and *Servetus* in *Audin*—Br. and F. Ev. Rev., etc.

On Book of Job in Rev., etc.

FEBRUARY

Max Müller on Language.

Scott's Lord of the Isles.

Cairns' Romanism and Rationalism.

Rilliet's Calvin and Servetus by Turedin.

Hamilton's Pentateuch and its Assailants.

Miller's Geology versus Astronomy.

Colenso on Pentateuch, part 1.

Looked thro' and read most of—

Servetus by Chauffpie, Yair's Trans.

Much on Pentateuch and in Answer to Colenso.

Much on *Creation by Law*—'Vestiges,' Hitchcock, etc.

Much of Chalmers' Correspondence.

A Year's Studies

MARCH

Correspondence of Glasgow and other Congregl. Churches.
Dr. Begg on Preaching.
Cumming's Answer to Colenso on Pentateuch, Lects. 1-11.
Rogers' Reason and Faith.
Much of Alexander's 'Faith and Practice.'
Preparing Synod Sermon. 1st copy.

APRIL

Carson, 'Heresies of Plymouth Brethren,' and 'Letters (8) on Revival in Ireland.'
Taylor (Is.) 'Considerations on Pentateuch.'
Tracts for Priests and People. 2nd series.
King on Predestination by *Whately*.
Cumming's Answer to Colenso, Lects. 12-14.
Much on Reason, Conscience, and Faith in Articles in Evang. Review.

On *Maurice*,—Candlish Lecture—Evang. Rev.

Synod Sermon—completed and revised.

Little reading or study till after middle of month—rather busy then.

MAY

Maurice, Theological Essays.
Mansel's Limits of Religious Thought.
Alexander's Outlines of Moral Science.
Scott's Christianity and Secularism.
Cumming on Colenso, Lects. 15-18.
Trail on Colenso.
Read much on Mansel, Sir W. Hamilton, Maurice,—*Conscience*, *Reason*, *Faith*—particularly: In 'Evang. Rev.'
No. vii. Maurice's Short Essays.
xxviii. Mansel's Limits of Rels. Thought. Recent Applications of Philosophy, etc.
xxxv. Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy.
xxxvi. Reason and Faith, etc.
xxxviii. Dorner on the Mansel Controversy.
xxxix. That wh. may be known of God.
xliii. Philosophy of the Unconditioned.

A Year's Studies

Prepared Lecture on Anglo-Saxons, and read much on the subject.

JUNE

Stoughton's 'Ages of Christendom.'
Mander's Julian by Cox.
Cunningham's Works, vol. 4, 1-210.
Sortain's Hildebrand.
London Lectures to Y. Men, 1862-63, abt. ⅔ of.
Cons. attention to Eccl. Hist. of 5 and 6 Cents.
Some attention to Heb.
Studied 'Infant Baptism' a good deal—read several articles on.

JULY

Tracts for Priests and People. 1st Series.
Spenser's Abrdmt. of *Wall* on Baptism.
London Lectures to Young Men—*finished.*
Gilfillan's 'History of a Man.'
Wardlaw on Preaching to Unconverted.
Hamilton's Life of Lady Colquhon.
Sinclair's Letter on the Xtn. Faith with Memoir.

M'Leod's Earnest Student. 11th ed.
Memoir of Sir John Sinclair (Chambers' Trs.).
'Good Words,' papers on, from 'Record.' Exposure of do.
Halley's Cong. Lect., 2 vols., 2d ed. The Lectures on Baptism.
Wardlaw's Appendix on do.
Halley's Reply to do.

Pt. of Sinclair's Analysis of Stat. Acct.
Pope's Essay on Man and Moral Essays.
Carlyle's 'Model Prison.'

AUGUST

Halley's Cong. Lects., 2 vols.—*fin'd.*
Wordsworth on Inspiration.
Memoir of A. N. Groves by his Widow, with part of Kitto's Life.
Stowel on Baptism—reply to Halley.
Halley's Reply to Stowel.
Wood's on Infant Baptism by Morison.
Foster on Impr. of Time, Sermons, Letters.

Foster's Discourse on Missions to Hindostan.
Venn's Life and Correspondence, 1-314.

Book cases, several, much arrangement of books.

SEPTEMBER

Venn's Life and Correspondence, 314—end.
Scott's 'Ivanhoe.'
Watson's Life of Wesley.
Taylor's Wesley and Methodism.
Laurence's Bampton Lectures, but some of Notes.
Wilson (Prof.) on Baptism, 1-186.

A good deal of misc. reading as to *Wesley* —some of *Arnold's* Rugby School Sermons.
Essays and Revs., Essay VII. with corresponding parts of 'Aids to Faith,' and 'Replies to.' Buchanan, do.
Inquiries on History of English Literature, etc.

OCTOBER

Wilson (Prof.) on Baptism—finished.
Stephen's Colenso examined.
Macdonald's Examination of Colenso.
Noctes Ambrosianae. Vol. i.
Lord Lindsay's Letter on Evidence, etc., of Xtnty.
Brown's Sermon—'Altar-Wisdom.'
Mitchell (Insch), two Discourses, 1844.
Much time in reading Reports of Social Science Meetings in Edinr.
Br. and F. Evang. Rev. for this Month—nearly all.
On *Miracles* in 'Essays and Reviews,' 'Replies' to, 'Aids to Faith,' etc.
Pt. of *Jebb's* 'Pract. Theology.'
A good deal of misc. reading, but almost no solid study.
Inaugural Addresses by Lord Rectors, *Glasg. Univ.* Edinr., 1845.

A Year's Studies

NOVEMBER

Noctes Ambrosianae. Vol. 2.
Riddle's Bampton Lectures.
Memoir of Dr. Eb. Henderson by his daughter.
D'Aubigne's Discs. on Authy. of Scripture, by Tweedie.
Candlish, Reason and Faith.
Dewar's German Protestantism.
Halyburton on Faith.
Leifchild's Counsels to Y. Minis.
A good deal of miscellaneous reading in reference to need of Spirit in order to understand Scripture in Chalmers, Edwards, Buchanan, etc.
A good deal of general reading.

DECEMBER

Young's Christ of History.
Bushnell, Character of Jesus.
Xtnty. in first three cents., Bungener, D'Aubigne, etc.

An Aberdeenshire Minister

Leifchild's Sermons on Xtn. experience.
Wilson's Isle of Palms, City of the Plague, and other poems.
M'Gilvray's Synod Sermon.

Several of 'Tracts for the Times' in 1st and 2d vol., and a good deal on them in Isaac Taylor, Faber, Buchanan, etc.
Pt. of Morell's Hist. of Philosophy.
Prepd. Lecture on China, read much on.

On Friday 4th got first vol. of 'Tracts for the Times,' and read some of them. Had never even seen one of them before. Peculiar feelings on this occasion.
58 vols. read *thro'*, *much* of several others.
17 pamphlets.

Chief topics of interest:—

1. Colenso on Pentateuch, and Literature connected therewith.
2. Province of *Reason and Conscience* in Religion, Mansel, Candlish, etc.

3. *Baptism*, Halley, Stowel, etc., etc.
4. Calvinism, Servetus.
5. Early Church.

Periodicals :—

Br. and F. Evang. Review.
Good Words.
Xtn. Treasury.
Family Treasury.
Chambers' Journal.
Cassell's Famy. Papers and Quiver.
Ev. Mag.—Xtn. Witness.
Record and Children's Record.
Br. Messenger.
Herald of Mercy.
Family Papers. Read Athenæum and Saturday Review.

It must be remembered that my father was a great reader of periodicals and newspapers. He had a Chinese reverence for printed matter, and could not bear to destroy anything. In consequence he accumulated an

immense number of journals and magazines. By his careful system of indexing he had all these at his command. His knowledge would have been invaluable to a journalist or an author, and he put it at the service of all who applied, though he made no specific use of it himself. He could have indicated better than any one I have ever known the fugitive sources which are so helpful in the writing of books—sources so difficult to discover.

As time went on it became difficult for him to house his huge collection of books, magazines, and newspapers. He contrived to find room for his books by setting aside three apartments solely given to that purpose, that is, they were not living rooms. He placed books round the walls, left a passage, and then built double bookcases also going round the room as far as possible, and with just enough space left to allow one to pass between them. There was very little furniture beyond bookcases. It is

astonishing how many books can be placed on this principle. In the room where he lived and worked he had only the books he was using. It was a real distress to him that any book should be out of its place. The newspapers became very troublesome. I quote a memorandum which he wrote on this subject. He kept them partly in out-houses, but towards the end he was obliged to give many away, and among other things he presented a complete set of the *Aberdeen Free Press* to the Aberdeen Public Library.

NEWSPAPERS

How rapidly newspapers accumulate in *number*, weight, and bulk.

2 *Dailies* for a year, . . .	624
6 *Weeklies*	312
With occasional papers, say .	50
	986

Nearly 1000 in a year.

In a short course of years many thousands.

Weight—each paper about 2 oz.

oz. lbs.

One Daily in a year = 624 = 39.

1000 papers = more than a cwt. In 20 years more than a ton.

One Daily in a year = 2500 folio pages = 2 thick folio vols.

1000 papers = about 7500 folio pages = 7 thick folio vols.

Impracticable to preserve any such large and rapidly accumulating number of papers.

One Daily might be preserved if bound, making two large vols. yearly.

A *Weekly* might without difficulty be preserved.

The best way would be to select—mainly or wholly—from the *Dailies*, and specially the Dy. Review :—

1. A very small number—say $\frac{1}{10}$—of special interest and permanent value. These for a few years to be bound in a vol.

2. A large number of less interest or less permanent value—say $\frac{1}{6}$.

3. All the rest of the series to be put up monthly in parcels, and laid past year by year.

All of Class 1, 2 to be carefully docketed, but not of Class 3, unless in special cases.

Class 1 would include all papers of local or personal interest, important reviews, or literary article. Ecclesiastical papers and reports, such as Assembly, public lectures and addresses.

Class 2, articles of a like kind, but of less permanent value.

Weeklies not to be docketed unless in special cases. One or two more fully.

All kept in order in unbroken parcels.

All papers of one kind to be put up by themselves—not mixed up with others.

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Periodicals accumulate fast in number, bulk, and weight.

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6 monthly,	72	„
5 quarterly,	20	„
Occasional or smaller,	50	„
	454	

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IX

HIS POLITICS

Though my father never took any public part in politics, and lived on the best of terms with his lairds, he was an advanced and convinced Radical. Indeed, he went further than most Radicals of his day. There was a group of men in Scotland somewhere about the fifties who wrote on the sociological problems of the future. Two of them were my father's friends—William M'Combie, editor of the *Aberdeen Free Press*, and the Rev. John Peden Bell, United Presbyterian minister of Midmar. I have heard no less an authority than Sir John Macdonell speak in warm praise of Peden Bell's little book, and M'Combie

was pre-eminently thoughtful. There was another, Patrick Edward Dove, a Glasgow editor, who wrote some books including *The Theory of Human Progress* and *The Logic of the Christian Faith.* With Dove's works my father was thoroughly familiar. Once he received for review a posthumous book of lectures on apologetics by a Scottish professor. He pointed out immediately that the author had borrowed largely from Dove. If I am not mistaken, Henry George claimed that Dove was one of his own precursors. But my father believed that social progress would advance very slowly. 'It will not come in my time; it will not come in your time.' But he had no doubt that a fundamental change would pass over the constitution of society. Robert Chambers, as early as 1845, expressed similar views, and told his workpeople that the day was coming when the relation of master and servant would disappear.

My father, notwithstanding his own stern

experience borne so cheerfully, had something like a horror of poverty. Hartley Coleridge in his life of Arkwright draws a contrast between 'that willing poverty which wins the soul from earth and fixes the desires on high—that poverty which was heretofore to be found in mountain villages, in solitary dwellings midway up the bleak fell-side where one green speck, one garden plot, a hive of bees and a few sheep would keep a family content—that poverty which is the nurse of temperance and thoughtful piety, and the squalid, ever-murmuring poverty cooped in mephitic dens and sunless alleys—hopeless, purposeless, wasteful in the midst of want — a poverty which dwarfs and disfeatures body and soul; makes the capacities and even the acquirements of intellect useless and pernicious: and multiplies a race of men without the virtues which beasts oft-times display — without fidelity, gratitude, or natural affection.' But my father believed

that extreme poverty in every form was a great evil, and no text was more frequently on his lips than this: 'The destruction of the poor is their poverty.' In his early years the great majority of the people were exceedingly poor, living in little houses built of rough stones and clay, and thatched with turf with straw over it fastened down with straw ropes. Then came a period of considerable prosperity, broken at last by the depression in agriculture which led to the diminution of the population and made the business of farming very difficult.

Looking back to these old days, I can see that two politicians filled my father's mind. One was Brougham, whose meteoric, but on the whole beneficent, career he had followed with intense interest. He went all the way to Edinburgh to hear him deliver one of his last speeches, and, though he heard nothing, he was content with seeing. Gladstone he followed with a kind of reluctant and timid enthusiasm. What a place that man held

in the Scottish heart! For a whole generation he played between horizon and zenith like a flaming sword drawing all eyes to its effulgence. My father believed that Gladstone's churchmanship made all his statesmanship doubtful, and was convinced that in his intellectual methods he was a Jesuit. Yet ever and anon he was carried off his feet with a passionate admiration and hope. When Gladstone brought in the Home Rule Bill my father ceased to follow him, and after that he took little or no interest in politics. 'So Gladstone would hand Ireland over to the Papists!' he said to me, and I knew that his mind was closed.

X

HIS RELIGION

If my father had been asked why he devoted so much time to books he would undoubtedly have answered that he did so in order to qualify himself for his duties as a minister. He had the utmost belief in a learned ministry, and especially in a ministry conversant with the original Scriptures. His whole heart would have gone with Tennyson when he scoffed at the idea of priests who did not know their sacred books. I quote from his journal of January 1883 his purposes for study that year — his seventy-first year :—

January 1883.

1. Reading and study to be mainly limited to subjects of present interest and present use.

2. Aim to keep abreast on the great questions of the day—Biblical, theological, religious.

3. Aim to read habitually portions of Greek New Testament and often of Hebrew Old Testament, of Latin classics, and of the Greek occasionally.

4. Smaller new books, pamphlets, lectures, sermons, etc., for complete reading.

5. Larger books new or old in select parts in so far as of present interest and use.

6. The more important articles in periodicals to be read as they come out.

7. Select parts of first-class writers to be read often.

And again in 1884:—

1 January 1884.

1. Gr. N. T.—*habitually*.

2. Hebr. and Septg. Psalms—*saepissime*.

3. Recent Commentaries and Biblical works—*habitually*.

4. Best books, articles, etc., on the great

Biblical and Theological Questions of the day—*much and often.*

5. Best devotional and spiritual works—*Habitually.*

6. Special attention to the best sacred poets, and to selections from the more eminent poets generally.

7. Much of the more eminent prose writers, in best works or selections.

8. Best articles in Reviews and other periodicals as they come out.

9. Special attention to sermons by eminent preachers, and to pulpit literature generally.

10. Latin—Horace, Virgil, and selections —*saepissime.*

11. Greek, French, German—*occasionally.*

12. Some of the best classical and continental works in translations.

Reading and study only as interesting and useful at the time.

Little or no *through* reading of larger works.

Satisfactory tho' only one branch attended to for a time.

But though he spent much time and pains on his sermons, he did not cut a channel between them and his reading. This was partly due to his theory of preaching. He never told anecdotes, very rarely used illustrations, made it a principle never to employ the first personal pronoun or to relate any experience of his own. He had no poetical quotations, and he abhorred perorations. His sermons were clear, able, and deeply reverent expositions of evangelical theology. The main subject of his teaching was the Holy Spirit. If he had no popular arts, he contrived to instruct his people, and many of them thoroughly understood the details of his system. That he also exercised a strong religious influence is quite certain, though anything in the nature of sentiment and emotion was foreign to his style. He had a weak voice, and

whenever he preached he seemed overwhelmed by the responsibility of his work. I find among his papers a significant 'Note on the Ministry':—

'The eminently self-denying the most successful. Ascetic, indifferent to animal gratification, indifferent to the world—unearthliness, giving up for Christ the ease and comfort of life repaid a thousand times in their success. Edwards, Neff, Baxter, Whitefield, Wesley.'

It should be said that occasionally a startling touch of the modern spirit appears in his sermons. Thus, in a sermon, 'The truth as it is in Jesus,' the first head is, 'The truth as it was in His eyes.'

To know his powers of speaking one had to hear him lecture. For many years he was accustomed to lecture in the district within a radius of about fifteen miles from his home. He chose such subjects as The Anglo-Saxons, China, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Geology, The Catacombs, and there

was no man who drew larger audiences. There was long a zeal for this kind of teaching, and my father was eminently fitted to supply it, for when he was natural he was one of the most lucid, telling, and interesting speakers I have ever heard. He was also very much in request for social gatherings. In the courts of his church he took an active part, being clerk of his Presbytery, and a regular attendant on the Synod. For a long course of years his ministerial labours in his own parish and countryside were abundant, and his erect figure with the head thrown back was well known on Donside roads. As there was practically no railway communication, much of his time was spent in long walks. He thought nothing of walking twelve miles to give a lecture, and walking back after the lecture was delivered.

I must say something about his attitude to his children in matters of religion, and

the position he took on controversies about the faith. As for the first, we knew that he was profoundly religious—that religion with him was first and last. We learned our psalms and chapters, and went to church and Sunday-school. But my father never spoke directly to any of us about religion. On Sundays we sat in a room where there were none but books concerning religion. Among them, however, were sceptical books side by side with the others. There were the words of Francis Newman, Colenso on the Pentateuch, Samuel Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament*, the *Vestiges of Creation*, the lives of Christ by Strauss and Renan, *Essays and Reviews*, and many more of the same kind. We were quite free to read any of these, and I read particularly some books of Francis Newman and was rather impressed by them. Walking one day with my father, I said tentatively, 'There are great difficulties about the Old Testament.' 'Oh yes,' he

said, 'what have you been reading?' I told him. 'Yes,' he answered, 'but you know Francis Newman is always unfair. But there are great difficulties about the Old Testament.' This is all that passed. My father was quite willing to recommend a book when asked, but as a rule he did not put books in our way, but allowed us to choose our own reading. He started us all with the *Arabian Nights* and *Don Quixote*. He was particularly pleased if we read the books he had just finished, as this gave him an opportunity of talking them over.

It will be seen from his journals that he kept pace with the controversies of his time. I heard much of them at the meetings of the Presbytery, where I was allowed to sit quietly in a corner. The ministers of the district were nearly all scholarly men. There was Dr. William Pirie Smith of Keig, the father of Robertson Smith, with his keen eyes, his long white beard, and his

singularly incisive way of speaking. There was A. C. Fullarton of Strathdon, who had come from Glasgow University laden with honours. He was Lord Kelvin's first prizeman and favourite pupil. There was Dr. Mackay of Rhynie, father of the eminent missionary Mackay of Uganda, and well known in these days as the writer of a series of geographical textbooks published by Blackwood and for long used very extensively. These men knew what was passing in the world of thought, and their intellectual interests were of the keenest. Robertson Smith himself was laying the foundation of his wonderful learning, and when he came to the Presbytery there was a sensible quickening of the interest. At Aberdeen University he had boldly controverted his teacher, Professor Bain, and protested against the dominance of John Stuart Mill. I remember his first publication, an attack on a passage in Mill's *Logic* issued in the *Proceedings* of

the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Robertson Smith believed that he had undermined the system, but Mill, while courteously acknowledging the errors pointed out, said that he could not agree with the inferences drawn from them. Darwinism became a chief subject. With many it fell upon the orderly process of mental evolution like a shell, blasting and wrecking it. They had to begin all over again and discover the ideal anew both in the mind and in the world. But this little circle was not intimidated by Darwinism, and Robertson Smith believed that there was a way of refuting it. He became assistant to Professor Tait of Edinburgh, and enjoyed the intimacy of Lord Kelvin—Professor William Thomson as he was then. These philosophers believed that the facts as to the age of the earth negatived the Darwinian theory, at least as then stated. Their views were expounded in an article published in the *North British Review*.

It was by Tait, but it was a manifesto. Robertson Smith never lost an opportunity of attacking the scepticism of Huxley and Tyndall. I find him in a notice of *A Creed of To-morrow* in the *Aberdeen Free Press*, 1872, writing about 'an age indulgent beyond most others to ignorance which calls itself philosophy, and blindness which calls itself scientific doubt.' When in 1874 Tyndall gave his Presidential address to the British Association in Belfast, Smith went over and published in the Belfast newspapers a most scathing criticism of the historical errors in the address. At first Smith's positions in Biblical criticism were substantially those of Ewald, and in the first long article he published, 'Prophecy in the Critical Schools of the Continent' (*British Quarterly Review*, April 1870) he attacked Kuenen, and even criticised Ewald for failing to do justice to the miraculous element in the Old Testament. 'The dislike for the miraculous which the long

predominance of rationalistic philosophy has almost ingrained into German thought, has often produced, even in critics like Ewald—who we hope to show are by no means naturalistic at heart—an unwarranted mistrust for many Old Testament narratives, and has encouraged the formation of orderly historical theories for which scattered hints in the prophets form almost the only basis.'

My father took an active part in the election of Robertson Smith to the Chair of Hebrew in the Free Church College at Aberdeen. One difficulty was Smith's youth; he was only twenty-two. To Smith's great indignation an erring newspaper announced that he was twenty-one. Smith resolved to have an apology; but my father got over the difficulty by getting in a paragraph which put the fact of his age in the most favourable light. It contained the words: 'Mr. Smith who is now, we understand, in his twenty-third year.' But in the later

developments of Smith's critical views my father could not follow him.

What I have tried to make plain is that the atmosphere in which individual thought was discussed was one of scholarship and of free and fearless discussion. The steadfast fidelity and calm courage with which the facts were faced made their own impression.

XI

HIS CLOSING YEARS

In the last ten years of his life, from seventy to eighty, my father was free of pastoral responsibilities, and more happy, perhaps, than at any previous period. He maintained his old delight in nature. His heart to the last leapt up when he beheld a rainbow in the sky. He did not give up buying new books, but he developed still further the true bibliomaniac's passion for buying duplicates. For long he was ashamed of these extravagances, and used to conceal his purchases. He went twice a year to the Synod at Aberdeen, had a round of the booksellers, and invariably ordered many duplicates.

The carrier delivered the book parcels on Thursday, and it was the rule that I should go up for them and bring them down, and be present at the opening. But on the Thursdays after the Synod my father went up a private lane with a wheelbarrow, and brought the books home with a guilty countenance. It was etiquette that none of us should appear to know anything about these proceedings. But at last his conscience became easy. He said to me, 'You are never safe with only one copy of a good book,' and he acted on this maxim. His books were at all times in such order that he could have found any one of them in the dark.

His interest in literature was unabated. I discovered after his death that he had been in the way of walking every fortnight to the village of Rhynie, four miles distant, in order that he might read the reviews in an Edinburgh paper. One of the tradesmen kept a file, and allowed him to peruse them,

and he walked the four miles back quite satisfied. Almost to the end he refused to use the omnibus from the village to the railway station, a distance of eight miles. He preferred to walk; and in a lecture to the villagers he told them that he was thus able to buy two books costing 1s. 6d. each. I take from his journal for 1891, the last year of his life, the following :—

'Chief subjects—Incarnation, Atonement, Servant of the Lord in Isaiah, Robertson of Brighton.'

During the year among the other subjects mentioned are: 'Byron—much on his life and works.' The very last entry, written just before the end, is—

August

'"The Christ that is to Be."
Ireland's "Life of Mrs. Carlyle."
Gordon's "Impressions of Paris."
Gilfillan's "Journal and Letters."
Little but desultory reading.'

His Closing Years

He preached occasionally but not frequently, and cheerfully occupied the pulpits of Established Churches as well as Free. The mingled hope and awe which seemed to make up his religion were always in evidence, and occasionally his personal reserve was broken. Thus a correspondent writes me that after his last service at a farm where he had been accustomed to preach, he was asked to say grace at the meal which followed. The old man lifted his thin, frail arms and said with deep feeling—

> 'Oh spread Thy covering wings around
> Till all our wanderings cease.'

Reverence above everything characterised him. When told that he was dying, all he said was, 'It is a solemn thing.' He joined in repeating the twenty-third Psalm, and said no more. Like Macleod Campbell, 'He spoke not much about religion when dying. His silent death was like his life—an amen to God's will.'

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Nicoll, Sir William Robertson, 1851-1923.
My father; an Aberdeenshire minister, 1812-1891. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1908.
xiv, 101p. illus. 24cm.

1. Nicoll, Harry, 1812-1891.

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